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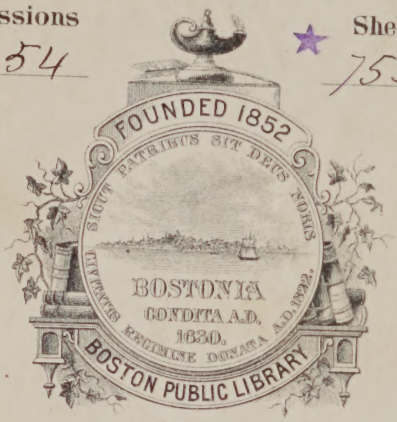

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RESOURCES OF THE ADVERSARY AND MEANS OF THEIR DESTRUCTION.

A

SERMON

PREACHED OCTOBER 12, 1827,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS,

AT

NEW-YORK.

BY LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.
OF BOSTON, MASS.

Boston:
PRINTED BY CROCKER AND BREWSTER,
47 Washington-Street.
1827.

From Pgh. v. 402

91354

Jona French,

Feb. 24, 1869,

SERMON.

Isaiah xlix. 24, 25.—Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.

Isaiah liii. 12.—Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death.

Luke xi. 21, 22.—When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Rev. xi. 15.—And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Rev. xix. 5, 6.—And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

The Scriptures teach, that sin commenced its reign on earth under the auspices of a mighty fallen spirit; and that he, having seduced mankind from their allegiance to God, has been constantly employed to maintain his bad eminence over them. They also teach, that the Son of God has interposed to destroy the works of this spirit; and that he will accomplish the object: that the power of Satan shall be broken; and the whole world be restored to loyalty and the favor of Heaven.

The passages, which have just been recited, allude to the success with which the enemy of God has fortified his cause—to its final overthrow—and to the exultation and joy with which the event will fill earth and heaven.

I am aware, that with some, the doctrine of fallen angels is but an eastern allegory; and the idea of a conflict, between the creature and Creator, ridiculous and unworthy of the divine supremacy. I can only say, that if there be not an order of sinful intelligences above men, the Bible is one of the most deceptive books ever written. The entire history of the world shows, that human depravity, though operating in accordance with the laws of mind, is yet methodised and wielded with a comprehension of plan, wholly inexplicable upon the principle of accidental coincidence among men. That there should have been a system of well-constructed opposition to the Gospel, varying with circumstances, and comprehending the great amount of bad moral influence which has existed, without some presiding intellect, is as improbable, as that all the particles of matter which compose the universe, should have fallen into their existing method and order by mere accident, and without the presiding intellect of the Deity. And as to moral competition between the creature and the Creator, it exists, even if there be no fallen angels. It is a matter of fact before our eyes—a matter of experience too—that the carnal mind is enmity against God; and that God, in Christ, is reconciling the world to himself.

It should be remembered also, that when God has formed moral beings, even he can govern them, as such, only by moral influence, and in accordance with the laws of mind: mere omnipotence being as irrelevant to the government of mind, as moral influence would be to the government of the material universe. Nor must it be forgotten, that an alienated world requires more moral power for its restoration than that of simple law, which proved insufficient to maintain its allegiance. It requires a new moral influence so introduced and applied, as to corroborate law, and strengthen the loyalty of all the good, while rebels are reconciled and pardoned.

The reconciliation, through Christ, of such a world as this, in opposition to the rooted aversion of every heart, the concentrated power of social wickedness, and the ceaseless counteraction of mighty intelligences, principalities, and powers, does not seem to us an achievement unworthy of that Being, who numbers the hairs of our head. By prophets and apostles, it is represented as exhibiting the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the wisdom, and goodness, and power of God.

In this discourse, it is proposed to consider THE DEFENCES AND RESOURCES OF THE ENEMY, AND THE MEANS OF THEIR OVERTHROW.

We shall suppose, as the language of the text does, that the Christianity, which is to prevail on earth, is the Christianity of the heart, rising to high eminence, and extending its blessed influence through all the relations of society, until the kingdoms of this world shall become associations of holiness—the Gos-

pel become the predominant spring of action, and its morality the governing rule of all mankind. The array of opposition to such a glorious change on earth, now demands our attention.

1. At the head of opposition to the Gospel, in numerical power, must be placed *Idolatry*. To banish from the earth all knowledge of God and his government, and substitute a worship composed of lust and blood, seems most desirable to the great adversary, where circumstances allow it to be done: and this he has achieved in respect to about six hundred millions of the human family. In all that world of mind, knowledge is in deep eclipse, intellect slumbers, conscience is paralysed, and all holy intercourse between earth and heaven is cut off; while passion and appetite, inflamed by sin, are suffered to prey uncontrolled.

2. The next form of opposition to the march of holiness, is that of *Imposture*. This was introduced by Mahommed. It was a system accommodated to the condition of a mingled population, composed of Pagans, Jews, and nominal Christians, all in a state of great ignorance and deep moral debasement. By complimenting Abraham and Moses, he beguiled the Jew; by conceding to the Saviour the rank of a prophet, he seduced the degenerate Christian; and by giving ample license to sensuality, in time and eternity, he secured the Pagan: and what persuasion failed to accomplish, was finished by the sword. Thus one hundred and forty millions have been grouped together under the most ferocious and horrid despotism that ever warred against Heaven, or tormented man. Over

all these the smoke from the bottomless pit has ascended, intercepting the light of heaven, and dooming them for centuries to "darkness visible."

3. Cotemporaneously with this system of imposture, and like it a subject of prophecy, arose the *Papal superstition*, in the form of a corrupted Christianity, and adapted to a state of intellectual improvement where the grossness of Mahommedan imposture might not be likely to prevail. This has been, and is still, the master-piece of that wisdom which is from beneath; concentrating the bad influence of all past systems; satisfactory to the pagan, and not alarming to the degenerate Christian; dazzling through the medium of sense; and giving such a license to sin, or such a cheap escape from its penalties, as allayed all fear, and gave a license to boundless indulgence.

Until this horrid system arose, the resistance made to the church of God had been planted without her walls. Now the sacred citadel is assailed and entered. Her friends are driven out, subjected to obloquy and death. The perverted authority of Heaven, and the sacred name of Christianity herself, and all the glorious and fearful sanctions of eternity are arrayed against the pure Gospel. Instead of the fold of Christ, the church became a ferocious beast, not sparing the flock: instead of a pure virgin, the mother of harlots, corrupting the nations. Instead of reflecting the light of the Sun of righteousness, every orb was eclipsed, every candlestick removed out of its place; while the night of ages settled down upon the earth. In this tremendous period, knowledge and virtue expired, and corruption and violence, as before the flood, filled

the earth. The great merchandise was in the souls of men: the chief staples, indulgences to sin; and nothing but holiness of heart and life was absolutely unpardonable.

Here, around the standard of Christ, the kings of the earth took counsel against the Lord and his Anointed, to break his bands and cast away his cords. And here the atheist and the Jew, the infidel and the libertine, could wear the sacred vestments, and make war upon the Saviour and his friends.

Popery is a system, where science and ignorance, refinement and barbarism, wisdom and stupidity, taste and animalism, mistaken zeal and malignant enmity, may sanctimoniously pour out their virulence against the Gospel, and cry, Hosanna, while they go forth to shed the blood, and to wear out the patience of the saints. And though by revolutions it has been shaken, and compelled by motives of policy to cease a little from blood, not a principle of this system has been abandoned. All the wiles of ages past are put in requisition now, to heal the fatal wounds which the beast has received; and to render the system still more powerful and terrific. The leaven is in secret and in open operation, in this country; and the quick action of the beast to the touch of the spear, in Palestine, shows that he is neither dead nor asleep. And considering the civilization, and wealth, and science, which the system comprehends, it is from Popery, no doubt, that the Gospel is destined to experience the last and most determined resistance.

4. Another form of resistance to the Gospel is to be anticipated from the *despotic governments of the earth*

—so inconsistent in their influence with that illumination of mind and melioration of heart, which, it is predicted, shall prevail, and which the blessed Gospel never fails to produce. Hence it may be expected, that despots will take counsel against the Lord, as the march of intellect, and piety, and civil liberty, shall minister alarm.

To what extent forcible resistance will be made to the Gospel, it is not our object now to inquire; or whether republican forms of government will supplant the ancient dynasties. It is enough to know, that all the governments who yield to the intimations of that Providence which sends out religion and civil liberty upon the earth, will be safe and happy; and that all who make resistance, will be agitated by revolutions, and destroyed by heavy judgments. *Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; and be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.*

5. Another source of resistance to Christianity, is that of *crime in its varied forms.* A vast amount of capital is embarked in enterprises, which directly or indirectly war against morality. All this, when the spirit of Christianity shall prevail, will be contraband, and be withdrawn. The power of steam shall not needlessly violate holy time, nor the sail, without cause, whiten in the Sabbath sun, and spread itself to pervert the breath of heaven. Theatres, those "schools of morality," falsely so called, shall cease to beguile unstable souls, whose feet go down to death,

whose steps take hold on hell. Christianity, as she prevails, will form a public sentiment that will make virtue blush at the thought of meeting within the same walls, and breathing the same polluted air, and applauding the same exhibitions, with the most debased and wretched portion of the community. All who thrive and grow rich amid the desolations of inebriation, and all who desire to do wickedly without loss of reputation, or annoyance of conscience, will feel instinctively the approach of religion: and as their craft shall be in danger, will raise a loud and bitter cry—'Great is Diana. Great is Diana.'

Nor are the maxims of more reputable trade in such nice accordance with the "golden rule," as to need no revision, or to present no resistance to Christianity as she moves on to make it the universal actual law of commercial intercourse: while the entire world of honor must be expected to stand against that Gospel which forbids murder, and inculcates forgiveness, and arrays public sentiment against the guilty.

If the Gospel would prohibit only acknowledged immoralities, and wink at human weaknesses, the whole pleasure-loving world would consent to an armistice, and permit her to move on without much complaint. But the inexorable requisitions of purity of heart and self-denial, cannot fail to bring out against her a multitudinous and determined resistance. The haters of her uncharitableness, and the lovers of a more liberal way, and all classes of the openly wicked, will, it may be expected, as the light increases and enmity rises, be condensed into a firmer and firmer phalanx of opposition. And now will the

alarm be sounded about popery and priest-craft, by just that class of men, who, in papal countries, love darkness, and most cheerfully purchase indulgences to sin; and who, in this country, should the darkness of popery be permitted to come upon us, would be the first to hail it as a covert for their crimes and a quietus for their consciences. And yet panic-struck will many become about liberty of conscience, who long since have ceased to have any conscience; and suddenly will many fall in love with civil liberty, who, all their days and with all their might, have, by their pernicious influence, been employed in attempts to undermine her deep foundations.

6. To cover the nakedness of this forlorn hope of opposition to the Gospel, *a more liberal sort of religion* must be introduced, which shall keep them in countenance, and enable them to wield the name and institutions of Christianity against Christianity—including so much truth as may serve to beguile, but so little as cannot avail to save—sustained by such as live in pleasure, and will not bow the knee to Christ. The time will have come, when the light of science and of Christianity will have rendered obsolete the grossness of idolatry, the imposture of Mahommed, the superstitions of popery, and the impurity of infidelity. A religion must rise, therefore, under the last touchings and finishings of art, where infidels may be received without conversion; and where they may be converted with scarce a perceptible change in doctrine, heart, or life; and where, as in papal countries, the thoughtless, and the gay, and the beautiful, and the dissipated, may float to-

gether down the stream, to the sounds of music, and drink the lethean cup, and wake not till their redemption has ceased for ever. All this abomination of desolation is predicted, as attending the last triumphs of pure Christianity. *And he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.*

7. One other source of opposition to the progress of vital Christianity remains to be mentioned. There may be an attempt to wield the church against herself, by *corrupting the purity of revivals of religion.* Terrible, by the power of revivals, as an army with banners, her victory is secure, unless fanaticism can be substituted for pure religion, and her compact masses be broken and scattered by the commotion of unhallowed passions within. In this manner was the glory of the Reformation eclipsed, and vital religion, in the time of Cromwell, made a scoff and a by-word. The same attempt was made in New-England early in the days of our fathers. It was repeated in the time of Whitefield and the immortal Edwards, with lamentable, though with but partial success. As revivals shall become more extensive, and the Spirit of God shall awaken larger portions of the community at once, opportunity will be afforded to the enemy—and, apprised of his devices, we ought not to think that the opportunity will be neglected—of mingling false fire with holy zeal, for the purpose of throwing discredit upon a

work which threatens a speedy overthrow of his empire.

All these great divisions of systematic opposition to the Gospel have, where circumstances allowed, been defended by the sword. Christianity, in her first attempts to disenthral the world, met the storms of ten persecutions, protracted through a period of three hundred years.

The false prophet established, and still maintains, his empire by force. It is death to turn from Mahommed to Jesus Christ. And as to Popery, in her dominions, all the wiles and corruptions of idolatry and imposture have been condensed and wielded with infernal wisdom and malignity against the Gospel, ever since the apocalyptic kings gave their power to the beast. And when atheism, for a little moment, abolished popery, its terrific power was, at the same moment, directed with indiscriminate fury against Christianity. The Bible was burnt: the Sabbath blotted out: the existence of God denied: and death proclaimed an eternal sleep.

The Arian heresy, protected by the sword, wielded against the truth a furious persecution. In Holland, Arminius attempted to enlist both literature and the civil arm for the propagation of his sentiments, and, to some extent, succeeded. At Geneva, the enemies of evangelical sentiment, as appears from recent events, do not rely on charity, and enlightened reason, and liberty of conscience; but upon the civil power, to protect them in their usurpations, and to keep back the truth.

And now, can such varied and mighty resistance

be overcome? Can the earth be enlightened? Can the nations be disenthralled? Can the whole creation, which has groaned and travailed together in pain until now, be brought out of bondage into glorious liberty? Yes: all this can be done, and *will* be done. Our next inquiry then is,

BY WHAT *Means* SHALL EVENTS SO DESIRABLE BE ACCOMPLISHED?

First—By the judgments of Heaven, in which the Son of Man will come upon the strong man armed, and take away his armor.

Secondly—By the universal propagation of the Gospel; before the light of which, idolatry, imposture, and superstition, will retreat abashed. And,

Thirdly—By frequent, and, at last, general revivals of religion; giving resistless power to the Gospel, as it is preached to every creature.

Then will come to pass that which is written. Great voices will be heard in heaven, saying, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*: as the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, saying, *Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.*

It is manifest from prophecy, and clearly to be anticipated from the existing state of the world, that *great commotions and distress of nations* will exist, antecedent to the spiritual, universal reign of Christ on the earth. Some have supposed that these calamities will fall alike upon the church and the world; that as yet the witnesses are to be slain; and that, for three years at least, Christianity will seem to be blotted from the earth. Whereas, manifestly, the

judgments which are to precede the glory of the latter day, are to fall almost exclusively upon anti-christian nations. And if the witnesses are yet to be slain, they are to be slain in the street of that great city, which, spiritually, is called "Sodom and Egypt"—prophetic symbols, which have been understood to designate countries subject to the dominion of Antichrist. The very struggle to suppress vital Christianity in papal countries, called the slaying of the witnesses, may be, and probably will be, the result of moral causes now in powerful operation. Science, and commerce, and the progress of evangelical religion, are fast apprising mankind of their rights, and awakening the desire of civil and religious liberty. And this slaying of the witnesses may be the last struggle of those despotisms, to arrest the march of truth and freedom. It may be the collision between light and darkness—between despotism and liberty—which shall call out the kings of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty; when He, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, on whose head are many crowns, and whose vesture is dipped in blood, shall smite the nations with the sword that goeth out of his mouth, and rule them with a rod of iron, and tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; when the angel standing in the sun, shall summon the fowls of the heavens to the supper of the great God—to eat the flesh of kings, and of captains, and of mighty men.*

But without attempting a minute exposition of prophecy, nothing is more plainly revealed, than the

* Rev. xix. 17, 18.

visitation of the earth with unparalleled judgments and revolutions, preparatory to that state of light and peace which is to bless the world. So long as Satan can wield the power of despotic governments against the truth, he can hold his goods in peace. But these defences a Stronger than he will take away, when, in awful judgments, He shall come upon him. *He shall overturn, and overturn, until He, whose right it is, shall reign. The day of vengeance is in his heart, because the year of his redeemed is come. The foundations of the earth do shake; the earth is utterly broken down; the earth is clean dissolved; the earth is moved exceedingly; the earth shall reel to and fro; and the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth; and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit; and shall be shut up in the prison. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun shall be ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.*

One of these moral earthquakes has already shaken Europe to its centre; and the thunderings and heavings of the unquiet earth proclaim, that one wo is past, and behold, another wo cometh quickly.

When these systems of physical resistance are destroyed, then will the time have come to extend the institutions of the Gospel throughout the world. Be-

nevolence, like the air, will move to fill up the vacuum. Like the light from its great fountain, it will fly to cheer the nations who sit in darkness. And having no resistance to encounter, but the simple power of error, the conflict will be but momentary, and the victory complete. This also is in accordance with prophecy: for immediately after the downfall of Babylon is announced, all heaven breaks forth in ecstasy, saying, *Let us rejoice and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.* The church of Christ is called his bride; and the conversion of the nations to Christianity and to God, the day of her espousals.

That this glorious victory is to be consummated by *the special influence of the Holy Spirit,* is equally manifest. The simple presence of Christianity would no more convert the heathen, than it converts those where it already exists. Were every family on earth now blessed with a Bible and a pastor, these, without the effusions of the Spirit, would not maintain upon the earth an uncorrupt nominal Christianity, for one hundred years. Revivals of religion are alone adequate to the moral reformation of the world. All other means—science, legislation, philosophy, eloquence, and argument—have been relied on in vain. The disease is of the heart, and they reach it not. But revivals touch the deep springs of human action, and give tone and energy to the moral government of God. They multiply families that call upon the name of the Lord and train up children in his fear; and churches, constrained by the love of Christ to propagate the Gospel. They elevate the standard

of liberality, and augment the capital which is consecrated to the renovation of the world, and the importunity of prayer which secures its application and efficacy. They multiply the host of evangelical ministers and missionaries. They repress crime, and purify the public morality, and breathe into legislation and the intercourse of nations that spirit of the Gospel, which shall banish wars, and introduce peace upon earth and good-will towards men. They pour day-light upon darkness, and destroy, with a touch, the power of sophistry. Hence nothing is so terrible to the enemies of evangelical truth as revivals of religion, because nothing is so irresistible. If they oppose them by violence, they move on. If they misrepresent them, they move on. If they ridicule them, they move on. If they imitate them, the imitation fails, and they move on. While, often, the chosen vessels of opposition fall under their power—sending panic and rage through the ranks of the enemy. It is owing to this power of revivals, that they are every where, by the wicked, so much spoken against; and all the infirmities of humanity, which attend them, gathered up with such exultation, and urged as confirmation strong, that they are the work of man, and not the work of God. It is reserved, therefore, for revivals of religion to follow in the train of the means of grace with increasing frequency and power, until a nation shall be born in a day. This also is predicted.—*Who art thou, O mountain, before Zerubbabel? Thou shalt become a plain. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord. Drop down ye heavens from above, and let*

the skies pour down righteousness. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and with the brightness of his coming.

The judgments which are to shake down antichristian empires and cast down high imaginations, and lay open the world to the entrance of truth and the power of the Spirit, are to be closely associated with a new and unparalleled *vigor of Christian enterprise.* Until now, the church will have been the assailed party, and stood upon the defensive: but henceforth the word of command will not be, *Stand*, but MARCH. The gates of the holy city will be thrown open; the tide of war will be rolled upon the enemy; and one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

The means and efforts for evangelizing the world must correspond, however, with the magnitude of the result. The idea that God will convert the heathen in his own good time, and that Christians have nothing to do but to pray and devoutly wait, is found in no canonical book. It is the maxim of covetousness, and sloth, and uncaring infidelity. We have no authority for saying, what some, without due consideration, have said, that God, if he pleased, could doubtless in a moment convert the whole heathen world without the Gospel. It might as well be said, that he can, if he please, burn without fire, or drown without water, or give breath without atmosphere, as that he can instruct intellectual beings without the means of

knowledge, and influence moral beings without law and motive, and thus reclaim an alienated world without the knowledge and moral power of the Gospel. It is no derogation from the power of God, that, to produce results, it must be exerted by means adapted to the constitution of things which Himself has established. God has no set time to favor the husbandman, but when he is diligent in business; and no set time to favor Zion, but when her servants favor her stones and take pleasure in the dust thereof. From the beginning, the cause of God on earth has been maintained and carried forward only by the most heroic exertion. Christianity, even in the age of miracles, was not propagated but by stupendous efforts. And it is only by a revival of primitive zeal and enterprise, that the glorious things spoken of the city of our God can be accomplished.

Nor need we be disheartened. We possess a thousand fold the advantage of apostles and primitive Christians for the spread of the Gospel. And shall the whole church on earth—shall the thousand thousands who now profess the pure religion—be dismayed and paralyzed at an enterprise, which had once been well nigh accomplished by the energies of twelve men?

But what can be done? It would require ten discourses to answer this question in detail. We can only sketch the outlines of that moral array, by which Jesus Christ is preparing to come upon the strong man, and overcome him, and take from him all his armor.

1. There must be *more faith* in the church of God.

All the uncertainties and waverings of unbelief must be swept away by the power of that faith, which

is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Those "scenes surpassing fable," when Satan shall be bound, and an emancipated world shall sing hosanna to the Son of David, must rise up before us in all the freshness and inspiration of a glorious reality. Such faith, and only such, will achieve again the wonders it wrought in other days. It has lost none of its power. Again, it will subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, obtain promises, stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, escape the edge of the sword, out of weakness become strong, wax valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. For this is the victory over the world, even your *faith*.

2. There must be *a more intense love for Christ* in his church.

Such love as now burns dimly in the hearts of Christians; a low, and languid, and wavering affection; halting between the opposing attractions of earth and heaven; may answer for standing upon the *defensive*, but never for making that *vigorous onset* which shall subdue the world to Christ. Effort will never surpass desire. And as yet our hearts are not equal to those efforts needed for the achievement of victory. They linger and look back upon the world. They hesitate, and slowly, and with a sigh, part with substance in penurious measure. Weight hangs as yet on the wheels of the Victor's chariot: and never, on earth, as in heaven, will it move,

> "Instinct with spirit,
> Flashing thick flames, ... unless
> Attended by ten thousand thousand saints."

3. There must come an era of *more decided action*, before the earth can be subdued to Christ.

Compared with the exigency, we have not, as yet, the semblance of an army in the field; and our munitions are yet to be collected. Two hundred souls constitute the entire force, which twelve millions of freemen, cheered and blessed with the light of the Gospel, have sent forth to bring the world out of bondage. And yet one half the nation is panic-struck at the drafts thus made upon her resources! What has been done, however, is but mere skirmishing before the shock of battle. Half the subjects of Satan's dark empire on earth have not heard, as yet, that we have a being. And were none but such feeble efforts to be put forth, he, instead of coming down in great wrath, would keep his temper, and leave the war to his subalterns.

Nothing great on earth, good or bad, was ever accomplished without decisive action. The cause, in the moral world, as really as in the natural, must ever be proportioned to the effect to be produced. And what have we done, as yet, to justify the expectation, that God, by such means, is about to *make all things new?* Could our Independence have been achieved by such indecisive actions as we put forth for the emancipation of the world? Dear brethren, we must fix our eye earnestly on a world lying in wickedness: our hearts must be fully set upon its deliverance: our hands must be opened wide for its relief. Not only the ministers of religion must give themselves wholly to this work; but all who prize civil and religious freedom—all who exult in these blessings must come

forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty. And when, to all who are now cheered by the light of revelation, the deliverance of a world in bondage shall become the all-absorbing object, and the concentrating point of holy enterprise, then speedily will the angel descend from heaven, with a great chain, to bind and cast into the bottomless pit him who through so many ages has deceived the nations. But,

4. For this glorious achievement, there is demanded *more courage* than has, in modern days, been manifested by the church of God.

Wherever circumstances have precluded the application of force for the defence of his cause, there the god of this world has attempted to fortify it by a *perverted public sentiment.* This, while it predominates, is as terrific as the inquisition; and if not as bloody, it is unquestionably as virulent, overbearing, and severe. Multitudes shrink before it, who would not hesitate to storm the deadly breach; and one half the power of the Christian church is doubtless this very moment paralyzed by it, if not even arrayed by its influence against the cause of Christ. Fashion is the Juggernaut of Christian lands; around whose car pilgrims of all conditions gather, and do homage.

Here, then, in communities civilized and nominally Christian, is to be fought one of the keenest battles: for after every strong hold is demolished, if Satan can but frame the laws of honor and of fashion, he will not fail to govern by maxims which will shut out the Gospel, and perpetuate the dominion of sin. And Christians are the first to be emancipated. While they are in captivity, the world will be in chains.

Jesus Christ must have entire possession of his own soldiers, before the armies of the living God can put to flight the armies of the aliens.

This conflict for dominion over public sentiment is coming on, and by this generation, in city and in country, it is to be decided, whether an evangelical or a worldly influence shall prevail—whether the landmarks of Christian morality shall stand against the inundations of vice, or, with every thing that is pure, and lovely, and of good report, be swept away. Emboldened by the pusillanimity of the friends of virtue, the enemy have become audacious, and scarcely covet the veil of darkness, but seem even to glory in their shame. And if no stand is made, we are undone. The church in this land will go into captivity, and the nation is undone. Our prosperity and voluptuousness will be our ruin; and short and rapid will be our journey from the cradle to the grave. But if resistance is made, then will the waves rise, and foam, and roar, and dash furiously upon those who shall dare to make a stand: and birds of ill omen will flap their sooty wings, and croak, and scream, to intimidate and dishearten the fearful, and the unbelieving: and all the engines of bad influence will be applied to prevent that coalition of patriotism and of virtue, which would set bounds to the encroachments of evil, and shed day-light upon the works of darkness, and stamp with indelible and intolerable infamy, wickedness in high places and in low places.

And now, *custom*, with silver tongue, will plead *prescription*—'It always has been so, and always will be, and why should we attempt innovation?' And *in-*

terest, too, will plead *necessity*—'How can I withdraw my capital, or alter my course? To refuse to do wrong a little, would be to take away my children's bread.' And now, *difficulty*, with good wishes and sorro ing face, will plead, 'Spare thy servant in this thing—is it not a little one?' While *fear* will see the giants, the sons of Anak, and call out for care, and prudence, lest we should act prematurely, or be righteous overmuch. *Petulance*, too, will lift up her voice, with vexation at our presumptuous meddling, wondering that we cannot mind our own affairs, and let other people alone. And even *charity*, so called, will draw aside her veil, for the archers with poisoned arrows to hit us. While *liberality*, provoked beyond endurance, will hail upon our heads the hard names of 'bigot, enthusiast, fanatic, hypocrite.'

All this, however, we could easily sustain, were there no treachery within. But our hearts are yet in too close consultation with flesh and blood. 'What will the world think? What will the world say? How will it affect my reputation—my interest—my ambition—or even my usefulness?—Suppose I step in as a kind of candid mediator between the world and my too zealous brethren, taking the prudent course, and not carrying matters too far?' O, that prudent course, —that middle ground—so crowded, when the lines are drawing between Christ and the world! Satan desires no better troops than neutral Christians. And the Lord Jesus Christ abhors none more. He prefers infidelity to lukewarm Christianity. *I would that thou wert either cold or hot; so then because thou art neither, I will spew thee out of my mouth.*

As to cheating Satan out of his empire over men, by a reserved course of warfare, he has no objection that Christians should dream about it, and try it. But we mistake, if we suppose our wisdom a match for his wiles; or that we can so prudently drive him out of this world, as that he will find no pretext for controversy. Whenever we do enough to give to religion a solemn reality upon the minds of men, and draw the cords of evangelical morality with such power, as shall compel reformation, or inflict disgrace; we must calculate to meet his resistance who reigns in the hearts of the children of disobedience. And the time will come, when men must take sides. For as the conflict between virtue and vice waxes warm, neither side will tolerate neutrality: and he who plants his foot upon neutral ground, will select just the hottest place in the battle, and receive the fire from both sides.

Two things are required of all who would be found on the side of liberty and evangelical morality. One is, that we will not do wrong in obedience to custom: The other is, that we will not be accessary to the wrong done by others—that we will give to the cause of virtue the testimony of correct opinions, the power of a correct example, and the influence of our inflexible patronage. There are piety and principle enough in the community to put down the usurpations of irreligion and crime, if the sound part of the community will only awake, and array itself on the side of purity and order. But we must come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. The entire capital in the hands of honest and moral men,

which is employed in establishments that corrupt society, must be withdrawn; and that patronage which has swelled the revenue of establishments that lend their aid to the cause of licentiousness, must be turned over to the side of purity and order. Until this is done, we shall not cease to be partakers in other men's sins. The press, that mighty engine of good or evil in a free country, must be enlisted decisively on the side of virtue; and its perverted influence, if it continue, must be sustained only by those whose guilty cause it espouses. We cannot, as Christians—we cannot, as patriots—give our patronage to that press which will not plead the cause of virtue, and which will prostitute its fearful energies to the cause of sin.

5. There must be new and more vigorous efforts to increase the number and power of evangelical churches in our land.

In all countries the tone of piety and evangelical morality corresponds exactly with the number, and purity, and energy of the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The want of this organized moral power in many parts of our land is appalling. Our population multiplies, and the ratio of good moral influence declines, and ignorance and crime are coming in like a flood. All that has been done by Tract Societies, by Sabbath Schools, by Education Societies, and by the National Society for Domestic Missions, is as the drop of the bucket to the ocean. A new and mighty effort is demanded to send light through the territories of darkness—to repress crime, and perpetuate our civil and religious institutions. In our large cities.

especially, is the increase of ignorance and licentiousness lamentable and ominous. Here wealth and temptation concentrate their power upon masses of mind, whose influence cannot fail to affect deeply the destiny of the nation. If they send out a vigorous current of healthful life-blood, the whole nation will feel the renovating influence: but if, with every pulsation, they send out iniquity and death, no power on earth can avert our doom.

A *moral* power is the only influence that can save our cities. Mere coercion in a land of freemen, will not avail. Nor will a lax nominal Christianity suffice, where offenders may find access to the table of Christ, and protection by the horns of the altar. The new churches, to succeed, should be composed of persons of real piety, of kindred sentiment, and of decided character; and, from the beginning, consist of so many members, and be blessed with such talent and devoted piety in the ministry, and be so countenanced and sustained by other churches, as that their attraction shall not fail to bring under the sacred influence of the Gospel the surrounding community. Until our cities shall thus be made to feel, in every part, the purifying power of the Gospel, the whole land will continue to send to them, as it has done, hecatombs of youthful victims, to be repaid by disappointed hopes and moral contamination.

6. Special effort is required, to secure to the rising generation an education free from the influence of bad example, and more decidedly evangelical.

The atmosphere which our children breathe, from the cradle upward, should be pure. Instead of this,

it would not be difficult to find common schools, in which ignorance and irreligion predominate. Even where the intellect is cultivated, the heart not unfrequently is corrupted, and the child made wise only to do evil. In a great proportion of the higher schools, to which Christians send their children, little exists of a decidedly religious tendency; while in some, a powerful influence is exerted against evangelical sentiments and piety.

And though in many of our Colleges there is a salutary religious influence, and repeated revivals of religion are enjoyed, in none is the influence of religion so decisive as it might be; while in some, to which pious parents send their children, the influence is directly and powerfully hostile to religion.

I am aware, that not a few regard religious influence in our Colleges as already too great, and that an effort is making to separate religion from science, during the progress of a collegiate education. And those who choose to rear Colleges, and send their offspring where the power of the Gospel shall be excluded, have, doubtless, a right to do so—answerable for their conduct only to God. But no Christian can do this without violating the vows of God which are upon him, to train up his child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And, instead of a compromise in the evangelical Colleges of our land, there should be, as easily there may be, a more decided tone of religious influence. Our Colleges should every one of them be blessed, not only with preaching, but with kind, discreet, and assiduous pastoral instruction and care. Why should these precious communities of in-

experienced youth, separated from parental inspection, and exposed to peculiar temptation, be deprived of the watchful eye and parental voice of pastoral exhortation and advice? What parent would not pray with more faith, and sleep more quietly, if he knew that some one, acquainted with the youthful heart, and appointed to watch over his child, had gained his confidence and affection, and was praying and laboring for his salvation?

There is no period in life when the heart may be more successfully assailed, than that which is passed in a College. And there is no class of human beings, among whom revivals may be promoted, by proper pastoral attention, with greater certainty, or with greater power and glory. Nor can it be expected, that the church will ever look forth fair as the morning, until effectual care is taken, that in her higher schools and Colleges, her children shall be induced to consecrate to God the dew of their youth.

7. The vigor of *charitable effort* must be greatly increased.

As long as rich men shall trust more in uncertain riches than in the living God, and the covetous shall dare to heap up treasures to themselves, consecrating to God scarcely the crumbs that fall from their table, and the ambitious shall insist that they will roll in splendor, and give only the pittance which can be spared from the expense of a wanton ostentation—as long as professors shall consume, in extra gratifications of sense, to the injury of health, sums that, if consecrated to Christ, might suffice to extend the word of life and the institutions of the Gospel all over

the world—as long as avaricious Christians shall so extend their plans of business, with the increase of their capital, as always to be straitened in the midst of their gains—and as long as parents shall labor to amass wealth for their offspring, only to paralyze their enterprise, and corrupt their morals, and ensure their ruin,—so long the cause of God on earth must move slowly. But the blame must rest on us. There is at this moment, in the hands of Christians, capital enough to evangelize the world in a short period of time, and without the retrenchment of a single comfort, and only by the consecration to Christ of substance, the possession of which would be useless, and often injurious. It is not required of Christian nations to sustain the entire work of preaching the Gospel to all the unevangelized population of the earth. Nothing is needed but to erect the standard in pagan lands—to plant the seed—to deposit the leaven, in schools and in churches, until each nation shall support gospel institutions. This is the work to which God in his providence is calling the churches. Now, and for fifty years to come, the substance and enterprise of good men is imperiously demanded. Within that period, it is not improbable, that every nation may be so far evangelized, as that the work may move onward to its consummation, without extraneous aid.

8. The jealousies of Christians, who are united substantially in their views of evangelical doctrine and religion, and who are divided only by localities, and rites, and forms, must yield, and give place to the glorious exigencies of the present day. The amalgamation of denominations is not required. The division

of labor may greatly augment the amount; and the provocation to love and good works may be real and salutary, and still be conducted without invidious collision. Like the tribes of Israel, we may all encamp about the tabernacle of God—each under his own standard—and when the ark advances, may all move onward, terrible only to the powers of darkness. And if the enemies of righteousness are not sufficient to rebuke our selfishness, and force us into a coalition of love and good works; then verily it may be expected—and even be hoped—that God, by the fire of persecution, will purge away our dross, and take away our tin, until we shall love him, and his cause, and one another, with a pure heart, fervently.

9. Let me add, that we must guard against the dangers peculiar to a state of religious prosperity.

There is no condition in which an individual, or the church at large, can be exempted from temptations. And especially as the church shall become formidable, and bring upon the great enemy of God the pressure of a desperate extremity, we are to expect, that his rage will increase, and his wiles be multiplied. For he will leave the world only when forced; and will fight upon the retreat—giving many a desperate battle, when it shall seem as if the necessity was past of watching against his devices. Never, therefore, has the necessity of vigilance and prayer been more imperious than now. Let all the churches, then, with their pastors, feel deeply their dependence on God; and when their alms come up before him, and his Spirit shall descend in new and glorious showers, let them watch and pray that they enter not

into temptation, and experience an overthrow in the moment of victory.

To fear revivals, because attended by some indications of human imperfection, would be weak and wicked: and far from the church of God be the presumptuous confidence, that nothing deeply injurious to the general interests of religion can be blended with a real work of the Spirit. But though I am not without solicitude on this head, I do trust and expect, that God will preserve his churches, and cause pure religion and undefiled to prosper, and not permit the adversary to turn our glory into shame. O, could he do it, how would his minions scream out their joy! and how would Zion be confounded, and in this day of rejoicing, be compelled to hang her harp upon the willows, and sit down to weep in sackcloth and ashes! To conclude,

Will any of you, my hearers, in this glorious day, take side against the cause of Christ! It will be a fearful experiment. What the mind and counsel of God have purposed to do for the melioration of man is now hastening to its consummation, with the intenseness of infinite benevolence, under the guidance of unerring wisdom, and by the impulse of Almighty power. And wo unto him who contendeth with his Maker.—The lines are now drawing, and preparation is fast making for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And who is on the Lord's side? Who! Will any of you, in this sublimely interesting moment, stand on neutral ground! Remember, that neutrality is treason: and if persisted in, is as fatal as the unpardonable sin. Jesus Christ will have the decid-

ed services of his people. Already has he denounced as enemies, all who will not labor and suffer for him. *He that is not for me, is against me: and whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I came to send peace on earth;* (that is, that the progress of truth will be without resistance and persecution;) *I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come,* (that is, the effect of my coming will be, as the gospel prevails,) *to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.* These statutes are not repealed. And if the laws of Christian discipleship could bind men to give up every relative, and even life itself, for Christ and his Gospel, no excuse, surely, will screen from condemnation those who flinch and temporize, where the sacrifices required are comparatively trivial. If such as would not lay down their life for Christ, can not be accepted—what will become of those, in Christian lands, who will not lay down their substance, nor risk their reputation, nor lift a finger, to advance his cause?

Is there a Christian here, who cannot, for the year to come, double the amount of his charities? Is there one who will not now purpose in his heart to do it? Brethren, the time is short in which we here have opportunity to express our boundless obligations to

the Saviour. The fashion of the world passeth away. Next year, our tongue may be employed in celestial praises; and our substance be in other hands. What remains then, but that this day we dedicate ourselves, and our all, anew, to Him, who washed us in his blood? The tone of feeling which we cherish to-day, may, by a holy sympathy, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, be propagated through this great city—through this powerful nation—and through the world. The augmented religious enterprise, to which we pledge ourselves this day, may tell quickly in the very heart of Satan's empire; and cause light to spring up in retreats of deepest darkness.

If any man, however, is smitten with fear, let him retreat. If any man is faint-hearted, let him draw back. If any man tremble at his proportion of the charges for evangelizing the whole world, let him depart. If any man is alarmed at the noise which precedes the last conflict, let him hide himself, with his talent, in the earth! But let all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and wait for his appearing and glory—give themselves anew to his service; and break the earthen vessel; and lift up their light; and shout, *The sword of the Lord and of Gideon:* and the victory, and more than the victory, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God. And a great voice out of heaven shall be heard, saying, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

(Nov., 1891, 20,000)

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